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Agenda item 49

Sustainable development

Report of the Second Committee*

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I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 19 September 2008, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its sixty-third session the item entitled:

"Sustainable development:

"(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

"(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States;

"(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

"(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind;

"(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;

"(f) Convention on Biological Diversity;

"(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its tenth special session"

and to allocate it to the Second Committee.

* The report of the Committee on this item is being issued in eight parts, under the symbol A/63/414 and Add.1-7.

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2. The Second Committee considered the item at its 17th to 20th meetings, on 27 and 28 October 2008. An account of the Committee's discussion of the item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/63/SR.17-20). Attention is also drawn to the general debate held by the Committee at its 2nd to 6th meetings, from 6 to 8 October (see A/C.2/63/SR.2-6). Action was taken on the item at the 19th and 27th to 30th meetings, on 28 October and 18, 20, 25 and 26 November (see A/C.2/63/SR.19 and 27-30). An account of the Committee's further consideration of the item will be given in the addenda to the present report.

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

Item 49
Sustainable development

Report of the Secretary-General on products harmful to health and the environment (A/63/76-E/2008/54)

Report of the Secretary-General on the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/63/225)

Letter dated 14 March 2008 from the representative of the Sudan to the President of the General Assembly (A/63/66)

Letter dated 3 October 2008 from the representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the Secretary-General (A/63/464)

Letter dated 30 October 2008 from the representative of Uzbekistan to the Secretary-General (A/C.2/63/6)

Item 49 (a)
Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/63/304)

Letter dated 6 October 2008 from the representative of Namibia to the Secretary-General (A/C.2/63/3)

Item 49 (b)
Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/63/296)

Report of the Secretary-General entitled "Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations" (A/63/297)

Item 49 (c)
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/63/351)

Letter dated 3 September 2008 from the representative of Tajikistan to the Secretary-General (A/63/347)

Item 49 (d)
Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

Note by the Secretary-General on the implementation of United Nations environmental conventions (A/63/294)

Letter dated 6 October 2008 from the representative of Namibia to the Secretary-General (A/C.2/63/3)

Item 49 (e)
Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Note by the Secretary-General on the implementation of United Nations environmental conventions (A/63/294)

Letter dated 6 October 2008 from the representative of Namibia to the Secretary-General (A/C.2/63/3)

Item 49 (f)
Convention on Biological Diversity

Note by the Secretary-General on the implementation of United Nations environmental conventions (A/63/294)

Letter dated 6 October 2008 from the representative of Namibia to the Secretary-General (A/C.2/63/3)

Item 49 (g)
Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its tenth special session

Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its tenth special session[1]

4. At the 17th meeting, on 27 October, introductory statements were made by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs (under sub-items (a) and (b)); the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (under sub-item (c)); the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (under sub-item (d)); the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (under sub-item (f)); the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (under sub-item (e)); the Director of the United Nations Environment Programme

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 25* (A/63/25).

Regional Office for West Asia (under item 49); and the Chief of the United Nations Environment Programme New York Liaison Office (under sub-item (g)) (see A/C.2/63/SR.17).

II. Consideration of proposals

A. Draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.2/Rev.1

5. At the 19th meeting, on 28 October, the representative of Ethiopia introduced a draft resolution entitled "International Year of Chemistry" (A/C.2/63/L.2/Rev.1). Subsequently, Armenia, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, Guyana, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Kenya, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam and Yemen joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

6. At its 28th meeting, on 20 November, the Committee was advised that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

7. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of Ethiopia (see A/C.2/63/SR.28).

8. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.2/Rev.1 (see para. 20, draft resolution I).

B. Draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.3/Rev.1

9. At the 19th meeting, on 28 October, the representative of Turkmenistan, on behalf of Afghanistan, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Iceland, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Reliable and stable transit of energy and its role in ensuring sustainable development and international cooperation" (A/C.2/63/L.3/Rev.1). Subsequently, Canada, Chile, Egypt, Jordan, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic[2] joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

10. At its 29th meeting, on 25 November, the Committee was advised that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

11. At the same meeting, the representative of Turkmenistan orally revised the draft resolution by deleting the last preambular paragraph, which read:

> "*Welcoming* initiatives that aim to improve access to reliable, affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound energy services for sustainable development in order to contribute to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals".

[2] Subsequently, the Syrian Arab Republic withdrew as a sponsor of the draft resolution.

12. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.3/Rev.1, as orally revised (see para. 20, draft resolution II).

C. Draft resolutions A/C.2/63/L.24 and Rev.1

13. At the 27th meeting, on 18 November, the representative of Antigua and Barbuda, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Oil slick on Lebanese shores" (A/C.2/63/L.24), which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recalling* its resolutions 61/194 of 20 December 2006 and 62/188 of 19 December 2007 on the oil slick on Lebanese shores,

"*Reaffirming* the outcome of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, especially principle 7 of the Declaration of the Conference, in which States were requested to take all possible steps to prevent pollution of the seas,

"*Emphasizing* the need to protect and preserve the marine environment in accordance with international law,

"*Taking into account* the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, especially principle 16, in which it was stipulated that the polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution, and taking into account also chapter 17 of Agenda 21,

"*Noting again with great concern* the environmental catastrophe caused by the deliberate destruction by the Israeli Air Force on 15 July 2006 of the oil storage tanks in the direct vicinity of the el Jiyeh electric power plant in Lebanon, a civilian utility serving the general public, resulting in an oil slick that covered the entirety of the Lebanese coastline and extended to the Syrian coastline,

"*Noting again with appreciation* the assistance offered by donor countries and international organizations for the early recovery and reconstruction of Lebanon through bilateral and multilateral channels, including the Athens Coordination Meeting on the response to the marine pollution incident in the Eastern Mediterranean, held on 17 August 2006, as well as the Stockholm Conference for Lebanon's Early Recovery, held on 31 August 2006,

"1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/188 of 19 December 2007 on the oil slick on Lebanese shores;

"2. *Reiterates the expression of its deep concern* about the adverse implications of the deliberate destruction by the Israeli Air Force of the oil storage tanks in the direct vicinity of the Lebanese el Jiyeh electric power plant, a civilian utility serving the general public, for the achievement of sustainable development in Lebanon;

"3. *Considers* that the oil slick has heavily polluted the shores of Lebanon and partially polluted Syrian shores and consequently has had serious

implications for livelihoods and the economy of Lebanon, owing to the adverse implications for natural resources, biodiversity, fisheries and tourism, and for human health, in the country;

"4. *Requests* the Government of Israel to assume responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to the Government of Lebanon and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic for the costs of cleaning up and repairing the environmental damage caused by the destruction, including the restoration of the marine environment, and notes with deep concern the non-compliance of the Government of Israel with paragraph 4 of resolution 62/188;

"5. *Reaffirms* the necessity to adhere to the full and complete implementation of resolutions 61/194 and 62/188 on the oil slick on Lebanese shores;

"6. *Expresses its appreciation* for the efforts of the Government of Lebanon and those of the Member States, regional and international organizations, regional and international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in the initiation of clean-up and rehabilitation operations on the polluted shores, and encourages the Member States and above-mentioned entities to continue their financial and technical support to the Government of Lebanon towards achieving the completion of clean-up and rehabilitation operations, with the aim of preserving the ecosystem of Lebanon and that of the Eastern Mediterranean Basin;

"7. *Decides* to establish a voluntary trust fund for Eastern Mediterranean oil spill restoration in order to provide assistance and support to the States directly adversely affected in their integrated environmentally sound management, from clean-up to safe disposal of oily waste, of the environmental catastrophe resulting from the destruction by the Israeli Air Force of the oil storage tanks at the el Jiyeh electric power plant, and requests the Secretary-General to implement this decision before the end of the sixty-third session;

"8. *Invites* States, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to make voluntary financial contributions to the trust fund, and in this regard, requests the Secretary-General to mobilize international technical and financial assistance in order to ensure that the voluntary trust fund for Eastern Mediterranean oil spill restoration has sufficient and adequate resources;

"9. *Recognizes* the multidimensionality of the adverse impact of the oil slick, and requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution under the item entitled 'Sustainable development'."

14. At its 30th meeting, on 26 November, the Committee had before it a revised draft resolution entitled "Oil slick on Lebanese shores" (A/C.2/63/L.24/Rev.1).

15. At the same meeting, the Committee was advised that the revised draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

16. Also at the same meeting, the representatives of Lebanon and Antigua and Barbuda orally corrected the revised draft resolution.

17. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.24/Rev.1, as orally corrected, by a recorded vote of 154 to 5, with 3 abstentions (see para. 20, draft resolution III). The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Canada, Israel, Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Chad, Colombia.

18. After the adoption of the revised draft resolution, statements in explanation of vote were made by the representatives of France (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union) and Israel (see A/C.2/63/SR.30).

19. The representative of Lebanon made a statement (see A/C.2/63/SR.30).

III. Recommendations of the Second Committee

20. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I
International Year of Chemistry

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 61/185 of 20 December 2006 on the proclamation of international years,

Recognizing that humankind's understanding of the material nature of our world is grounded, in particular, in our knowledge of chemistry,

Stressing that education in and about chemistry is critical in addressing challenges such as global climate change, in providing sustainable sources of clean water, food and energy and in maintaining a wholesome environment for the well-being of all people,

Considering that the science and application of chemistry produces medicines, fuels, metals and virtually all other manufactured products,

Being aware that the year 2011 provides the opportunity to celebrate the contributions of women to science on the one-hundredth anniversary of the awarding of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry to Maria Sklodowska-Curie,

Being aware also that the year 2011 provides the opportunity to highlight the need for international scientific collaboration on the one-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the International Association of Chemical Societies,

Noting the adoption by the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its one hundred and seventy-ninth session of a proposal for the proclamation by the United Nations of 2011 as the International Year of Chemistry, and noting also the unanimous resolution of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, at its 2007 Council meeting, to have 2011 proclaimed the International Year of Chemistry,

Recognizing the leading role of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry in coordinating and promoting chemistry activities at the national and regional levels around the world,

1. *Decides* to proclaim 2011 the International Year of Chemistry;

2. *Designates* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as the lead agency and focal point for the Year and invites it to organize activities to be realized during the Year, in collaboration with other relevant entities of the United Nations system, the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry and its associated organizations and federations across the world, and, in this regard, notes that the activities of the Year will be funded from voluntary contributions, including from the private sector;

3. *Encourages* all Member States, the United Nations system and all other actors to take advantage of the Year to promote actions at all levels aimed at increasing awareness among the public of the importance of chemistry and promoting widespread access to new knowledge and to chemistry activities.

Draft resolution II
Reliable and stable transit of energy and its role in ensuring sustainable development and international cooperation

The General Assembly,

Bearing in mind the growing role of the transit of energy in global processes,

Recognizing the importance of Central Asia and all other transportation and communication hubs and their vital role in the production of energy and its transportation to international markets,

Noting that stable, efficient and reliable energy transportation, as a key factor of sustainable development, is in the interest of the entire international community,

Reiterating the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development[1] and of Agenda 21,[2] and recalling the recommendations and conclusions contained in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development[3] concerning energy for sustainable development,

1. *Welcomes* international cooperation in developing transportation systems and pipelines;

2. *Recognizes* the need for extensive international cooperation in determining ways of ensuring the reliable transportation of energy to international markets through pipelines and other transportation systems;

3. *Welcomes* the initiative of Turkmenistan to convene in 2009 a high-level international conference to discuss the issue of ensuring the reliable and stable transportation of energy to international markets.

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[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

Draft resolution III
Oil slick on Lebanese shores

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 61/194 of 20 December 2006 and 62/188 of 19 December 2007 on the oil slick on Lebanese shores,

Reaffirming the outcome of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, especially principle 7 of the Declaration of the Conference,[1] in which States were requested to take all possible steps to prevent pollution of the seas,

Emphasizing the need to protect and preserve the marine environment in accordance with international law,

Taking into account the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,[2] especially principle 16, in which it was stipulated that the polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution, and taking into account also chapter 17 of Agenda 21,[3]

Noting again with great concern the environmental disaster caused by the destruction by the Israeli Air Force on 15 July 2006 of the oil storage tanks in the direct vicinity of El-Jiyeh electric power plant in Lebanon, resulting in an oil slick that covered the entirety of the Lebanese coastline and extended to the Syrian coastline,

Noting again with appreciation the assistance offered by donor countries and international organizations for the early recovery and reconstruction of Lebanon through bilateral and multilateral channels, including the Athens Coordination Meeting on the response to the marine pollution incident in the Eastern Mediterranean, held on 17 August 2006, as well as the Stockholm Conference for Lebanon's Early Recovery, held on 31 August 2006,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/188 of 19 December 2007 on the oil slick on Lebanese shores;[4]

2. *Reiterates the expression of its deep concern* about the adverse implications of the destruction by the Israeli Air Force of the oil storage tanks in the direct vicinity of the Lebanese El-Jiyeh electric power plant for the achievement of sustainable development in Lebanon;

3. *Considers* that the oil slick has heavily polluted the shores of Lebanon and partially polluted Syrian shores and consequently has had serious implications for livelihoods and the economy of Lebanon, owing to the adverse implications for natural resources, biodiversity, fisheries and tourism, and for human health, in the country;

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[1] See *Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, 5-16 June 1972* (A/CONF.48/14/Rev.1), part one, chap. I.

[2] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[3] Ibid., annex II.

[4] A/63/225.

4. *Requests* the Government of Israel to assume responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to the Government of Lebanon and other countries directly affected by the oil slick, such as the Syrian Arab Republic whose shores have been partially polluted, for the costs of repairing the environmental damage caused by the destruction, including the restoration of the marine environment;

5. *Expresses its appreciation* for the efforts of the Government of Lebanon and those of the Member States, regional and international organizations, regional and international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in the initiation of clean-up and rehabilitation operations on the polluted shores, and encourages the Member States and above-mentioned entities to continue their financial and technical support to the Government of Lebanon towards achieving the completion of clean-up and rehabilitation operations, with the aim of preserving the ecosystem of Lebanon and that of the Eastern Mediterranean Basin;

6. *Decides* to establish an Eastern Mediterranean oil spill restoration voluntary trust fund, based on voluntary contributions, to provide assistance and support to the States directly adversely affected in their integrated environmentally sound management, from clean-up to safe disposal of oily waste, of this environmental disaster resulting from the destruction of the oil storage tanks at El-Jiyeh electric power plant, and requests the Secretary-General to implement this decision before the end of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly;

7. *Invites* States, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to make voluntary financial contributions to the trust fund, and, in this regard, requests the Secretary-General to mobilize international technical and financial assistance in order to ensure that the Eastern Mediterranean oil spill restoration voluntary trust fund has the sufficient and adequate resources;

8. *Recognizes* the multidimensionality of the adverse impact of the oil slick, and requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution under the item entitled "Sustainable development".